

# George Verwer at Calvary Chapel

by George Verwer

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*George Verwer's sermon emphasizes the urgency of global missions and the church's vital role in spreading the Gospel.*

**Duration:** 1:05:12

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Revelation 3:14-22

**Topics:** "Missions Work", "Total Commitment"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of both going and sending in spreading the word of God. He uses the example of Grand Prix Racing to illustrate that for every driver, there are 50 people on the team, highlighting the significance of those who support and send missionaries. The speaker also mentions the ship ministry, which has been going on for 28 years, and encourages the audience to read a book about it. He quotes Billy Graham, who said that the hardest thing for a person to give is their money, but clarifies that it represents their time, talent, energy, and more. The speaker challenges the audience to give their life in total commitment to God's work.

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## Transcript

Jesus said, go into all the world and preach the gospel to every single person. 2,000 years ago, he said that. And then just before he ascended into heaven, he said, when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea, Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth.

What a serious, awesome challenge that is. Let's just pray for some of the nations of the world right now. Father, we thank you for what you are doing across the globe.

But we know there are some countries that are in special difficulties. And I think of Sudan, where thousands have been slaughtered and killed, where children by the thousands wander like, almost like animals without their parents. We pray for changes in Sudan.

And also, Lord, we cry out to you for the situation in Afghanistan, where a couple million have died in the 10-year civil war, where things are continuing to be very chaotic. These fanatic Taliban fundamentalist Muslims persecuting women, all kinds of things that are quite mind-bending. We pray for Afghanistan to send out workers.

And we pray for those that are attempting to work there. Lord, our hearts also go out to the crisis in the Middle East, in Syria, and in Israel, and the surrounding countries. We pray that somehow this team going out there will be a great blessing.

And you'll use your church in Israel, in those surrounding lands, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. We pray for the Middle East and the land of Turkey. We're all, so few know you among 60 million people.

We thank you for new opportunities. And pray, Lord, for Europe, and for Central Asia, and for India with 900 million in Asia. And Africa, and Latin America.

We pray, Lord, that you would strengthen those who are already there. And the church that in some cases exists, but in other countries does not yet even exist. Oh God, we don't believe we're here by accident tonight.

And we're asking you to stir our own hearts as well, concerning our own nation and the world in which we live. In Jesus' name, Amen. It's a great challenge to be with you this evening.

And thank you for your prayers. Thank you for sending this dynamic couple over to us in England. England only has a fraction of people, eight, seven, six percent, who even go to church.

Many of those would never, would not know the living Christ. There is, however, in that small percentage, a dynamic remnant of godly people in Britain, where my wife and I have lived for over three decades. And we work very much with churches in renewal and commitment, in seeing new churches born.

We're especially focusing on 1.5 million Muslims living in the British Isles. So, it is a great mission field. And we're so grateful for Rich and his wife as they come to be with us.

Tonight is a very special night. This is International Literature Night. And wherever I go, I declare that International Literature Night.

We've set up a big display of books. And you're not going to believe this, but it's true. Every one of you tonight can get a book absolutely free.

A book worth probably seven to ten dollars. See, we read in the Bible, it's more blessed to give than receive. And for years, we were selling books.

We weren't getting as much blessing as we wanted. Taking all our money, we have these two ships. We're hoping one of our ships may come to Fort Lauderdale.

If you think that's a good idea, you can meet some people at our table who are trying to line this up and prepare the way for our ship Lagos II to come to Fort Lauderdale and then Miami. It's just been in Mexico following up on the hurricane, ministering to the physical needs of the people in Acapulco. A tremendous story where the mayor asked us to help out and there's not time to tell that.

The ship ministry has been going for about 28 years. And a little later, I'll tell you how it started when I got this idea in a converted pub in Bolton, Lancashire, England, where I was living at the time. One of the books that you can get free from our little book exhibit is a book about the ship ministry.

All the other books, you get one book free. All of you are going to want more than one book when you see these books. All the other books that are on a donation basis, you can give a check, you can give the

money later on.

Stephan, you can send postdated checks. We're part of the AD2000 movement. That's a network joining Christian movements around the world.

So we take checks postdated up to the year 2000. So you don't have any excuse for not getting some of these great books. It's very hard to outgive God.

I've tried for many years. Here's the number one book we're hoping you will take as a gift, the \$10 book by Norm Lewis, Priority One. How to Sort Out the Priorities in Your Life.

And as we give you that, it's an investment, and we believe it's going to pay big dividends, not for us, but for the kingdom. There's another one we're giving on the free list, How to Be a World-Class Christian. My own books are in the free section, and they never sell anyway.

No Turning Back, that's my name. George Verwer, not No Turning Back. The Unreached People, that's about praying through the 1040 window.

That's another one of those that's free. Serving Ascenders, one of the most important training books on missions. You're already using that in your church.

Again, a \$10 book. You can pick that up as a gift this evening. Now, the other books are available on a donation basis.

Give What You're Able. I learned that from my great friend Keith Green, who's now in glory. He even used to sell his music cassettes on a donation basis.

I have a singer that travels with me. We've just been together in Sweden, but he went on to Finland and I came to Florida. As far as climate, I got the better deal, I can assure you.

But a few of his tapes are there. Bill Drake, who I believe has the mantle of Keith Green. Some of my own cassettes are there.

That's a weekend missions conference. Luke Warm No More, which is the title we're giving to tonight's video and audio tape as well. Operation World.

How many of you already have that? It's the most widely circulated mission book in history. 500,000, this edition. Prayer Requests on Every Nation in the World.

Anybody who believes in prayer will want this book. I've always said all over the globe, this book's in many languages now. Anybody without two copies is probably blind or a backslider.

So that's a book, but you're going to have to give a little bit of donation. Greater Mission by Robertson McQuilkin. Another phenomenal, challenging book.

Everybody can have one of these newspapers. I'm not going to talk much about Operation Mobilization. I'm going to share a message from the word of God.

But if you'd like to know about OM, about the ships, about what's happening across the globe, there's 2,800 on our staff. This all started in my high school when I was just a kid. And it spread like wildfire across the world.

So you can pick up one of those little OM papers free indeed. And this, the really hot premier adventure of the year for me, this book, Grace Awakening by Charles Swindoll. How many of you know this book? Many of you.

You may also know you can't get it except 20 bucks hardback. This book has sold so well, they never took it out of hardback. I had lunch with a publisher and I don't want to tell you what I said.

But somehow after a year of prayer, they gave me my own private edition. I never saw until today. I bought 10,000 copies at \$1.37 a copy.

Nobody should ever tell you that. I don't even know if Swindoll's getting his little nickel out of it. But this here is a \$20 hardback book in tremendous beautiful paperback for any donation you get.

You give past \$1.37, we'll put the money into evangelizing India. This is the most significant book in the history of the United States Church in the last 25 years. If you read that, don't bother with the first three chapters.

They're a little slow. Get right into the middle of the book. I read the middle.

I went in both directions. I tell you, it blew my circuits. It was confusing as well.

Really. But if you don't get blessed out of this book, especially the middle chapters and especially the chapter on Holy Ghost oiling your marriage with grace, especially dedicated to legalistic husbands and chauvinists and other types. That's right.

You write to me, I will apologize and send you five free books. So Grace Awakening is the book of the night. We probably won't have any left.

That is not one of the free ones. We'd like you to give at least a dollar. Imagine all the people that have paid \$20 for that book.

I'm excited. I'm excited. How many are excited about Jesus? That's great.

Looks like I'm preaching to the choir again. I was converted in a Billy Graham one night meeting in New York City. I was lost as anybody could ever be.

I don't post about it. I'm ashamed of it. I was a liar.

I was hooked on pornography. I own three small businesses. Had two or three hundred people working for me part-time across the country.

I was on my 32nd girlfriend. Of course, this was the age of romance rather than the age of the bedroom. So I didn't have AIDS.

And then somehow a little old lady put my name on her hit list. It's unreal. This lady never even met me.

She heard I was in trouble with the police, in trouble with a school principal. She heard I was a loud mouth. Of course, I'm from New Jersey.

Most of us are pretty loud. And this lady not only put my name on her prayer list that I'd come become a Christian. That was bad enough.

She prayed that I would become a missionary. Can you imagine? She didn't even discuss this with me. Again, New Jersey is known for people being rude.

And so she then sent me a gospel of John through the mail. And I began to read this little gospel of John. By then I was hooked on pornography and a lot of other things.

And one could say, humanly speaking, what is the gospel of John going to do in the life of someone like myself? But as I read God's word, he spoke to my heart. And then Billy Graham came, not on a crusade. I hardly knew who Billy Graham was.

I just knew that most of my peers, people that I related to, they thought Billy Graham was off the charts. This was extremism. In fact, they told me he was a hypnotist.

A business person gave me a free seat on a bus. There was a girl who I thought could use this kind of hot religion. I heard a little bit about it.

By the way, I was starting to get religion. I joined the Boy Scouts. I tried hard to get in the Girl Scouts.

I joined the Boy Scouts. There's a lot of prejudice. And I actually was about to receive the God and Country Award, the highest religious award in scouting.

And I was lost and on the road to hell. I had one foot in the church and one foot in the world. From the New York City nightclub on Saturday night, sitting in this very, very liberal church where there was sort of a social club on Sunday morning.

Well, I went to that meeting because I thought he was a hypnotist. I sat as far away as I could. There were 20,000 in the meeting.

Got my binoculars I used at the races and watched Billy Graham. And all he did was preach a simple message from the Bible. The Bible is God's Word.

He kept saying, the Bible says, the Bible says. And it went to my heart in a powerful way. He then told people, I'd never seen anything like this in the churches I'd gone to.

And no one even moved in the churches I went to. They dozed off and fell over. But at the end of the meeting, Billy Graham gave an invitation for people to come forward and repent of their sin.

Imagine. And I, whoa, I didn't, I wasn't going to move. He said, pray.

I started praying for this girl next to me. And pretty soon the Holy Spirit convicted me that I was, I was a needy, lost soul. And I went forward and I was born from above.

I know some people mock these things, being born again. It's very easy to mock things. It's very easy to criticize things.

It's very easy to be cynical. But I will tell you, what happened to me that night, and I say this especially for those of you who may be young Christians, has been a dynamic, powerful reality every single day ever since. And that's now a long time ago.

When I first began to preach at 17, you know, most people didn't think too much about it. Guys just on some kind of late adolescent religious trip. Even when I preached and started preaching around the world

when I was in my 20s, a lot of people wouldn't listen.

You know, youthful zeal, especially in Europe where I lived, and in Spain and then Great Britain and a few other countries. Young people responded, but many older people were skeptical. And I don't blame them.

They wanted to see some real long haul proof. Well, here I am, 42 years after my conversion, a grandfather of four grand. Aren't grandchildren great? And if any of you got grandkids, I tell you, you know what Tony Campallo says, grandkids, that's God's reward for not killing your kids.

It's a tremendous, tremendous encouragement. My wife was going to be with me on this trip, also to see her parents who live in Florida. And somehow my daughter got ill, and she had to stay in England and be a babysitter.

It's great as parents to be wanted again. But sometimes we're not sure where we're coming or going. God is great.

There's a number of passages I want to talk about from the Bible. If you don't have a Bible or at least a New Testament with you, you should be shot. No, you can raise your hand.

And I understand they give out Bibles here. That's another free book for you. Can you raise your hand? These guys look a little bit slow.

Anybody that doesn't have a Bible, looks like everybody's got one. Raise your hand if you're maybe a stranger, you thought this was a rock opera and came in here. The Bible, God's Word.

I want to just share a number of Scriptures that have been very motivating for me. Isn't it amazing what they pay in America to hear a motivational speaker? You know, Tony Robbins, you know, it's 55 grand a shot. We're an amazing country.

But I believe the Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit can motivate you far more than the most gifted motivational speaker you will ever, ever find. I believe every many of you I know are already motivated. So you're going to go into what I call hyper motivation.

Some of you won't even need to use your car to get home. It's going to be an exciting night. But I believe the Bible motivates people.

And I have been motivated by God's Word almost every day since my conversion. There's so much in God's Word. And one of the things I love about the Calvary fellowships, chapel fellowships that I've spoken in different parts of the States, I think this is my 10th trip over here this year, is the emphasis on the Word of God.

The Bible is God's Word. You know, we're seeing chaos in Sweden right now because many of the pastors, they just took a survey and found this out. I've just flown in from Sweden.

A lot of the pastors do not believe the Bible is God's Word. Once we put the Bible to one side, there's no foundation. We no longer really know how to measure anything.

Morality, immorality, basic core values. And so what I share with you, I share with a conviction that the Bible is God's Word. Maybe when you heard this was going to be a bit of a missions emphasis, maybe you began to switch off.

Maybe you don't know what missions is all about. But I can assure you it's quite simple. Otherwise, characters like me couldn't be involved.

Missions is simply people. We're in the people business. And my greatest burden tonight isn't to recruit you into world missions.

The Holy Spirit is in charge of that. We measured on an international level, by the way, in the 82,000 movement, that about 40,000 young people are trying to get into mission. 40,000 Brazilians, Koreans, Argentinians, South Africans.

I've just been in the last year or two in all those places. The response is overwhelming. It is actually far easier to get recruits than it is to get churches to do what you just did, send them out.

Acts 13, where five people were praying, the Holy Spirit spoke, bang, Paul and Barnabas were sent. You read that. That's not one of our passages for tonight.

We just throw that in as a bonus. The local church is the key to world evangelism. And as I was looking at the little missions booklet of your own church this morning during my prayer time, I could only praise God.

You may not know all those people, but I know some of them, and they're being used of God to impact people, to serve people, to help people, to love people. I think of Perry and Diane Rickards. How many of you remember them? They're in your little booklet.

Your church supports them. We work together in the 82,000 movement. He's in YWAM, I'm in OEM.

We've linked together all these years. And God has used Perry in an amazing way. He's an unsung hero.

So I want to affirm you in what you're doing. I want to thank you. I want to thank you for even letting me here.

There's a new blacklist against missionary speakers. We're not allowed in, especially any larger meetings. They let us in the small meetings that no one comes to.

I heard of a church in New York City. I was praying the Lord might open the door to share with them. All I do is want to encourage.

I was saved in New York City. I'm a big Apple lover. But they sent us a note.

Our policy, we do not have visiting speakers. Can you imagine the arrogance? We don't have visiting speakers. Apostle Paul back from the dead.

You're not going to let him speak. Jesus Christ knocking on the door. Hey, I'd like to share my testimony.

No visiting speakers here. You know, really, I think a lot of our churches have hang ups. And I'm praying that somehow there may be a deliverance ministry to churches across America.

Let's start with a little passage, just a little spiritual snack in the book of Revelation. I know that's your favorite place for just little snacks. This one will probably finish you off for the next few hours.

The book of Revelation chapter three. I've got a different translation. I hope that doesn't frighten you.

I don't even know what translation it is. It's because it's Spanish. But next to the Spanish, you get one of these kind of Bibles.

One side is Spanish. The other side is English. And just looking at you, I think I'll read perhaps the English side.

Verse 14, chapter three. To the angel of the church in Laodicea write. This is the message.

This is the message from the Amen, the faithful, the true witness, who is the origin of all that God has created. I know what you have done. I know that you are neither cold nor hot.

How I wish you were either one or the other. But because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. Wow.

Did you know how many of you didn't know that was in the Bible? The verse about spit. I am going to spit you in old-fashioned translations, which some of you have. I will spit you out of my mouth.

You say I am rich and well off. We actually have groups, church groups in America that claim that. They claim they're in full prosperity.

They have everything by faith. So this verse is dedicated to them. You say I am rich and well off.

I have all I need. You do not know how miserable and pitiful you are. You are poor, you're naked, and you're blind.

Little blood. This guy must have been from New Jersey as well. I advise you then to buy gold from me, pure gold, in order to be rich.

Buy also white clothing to dress yourself and cover up your shameful nakedness. Buy also some ointment to put on your eyes so that ye may see. I rebuke and punish all whom I love.

Isn't that encouraging? Be earnest then and turn from your sins or repent. Listen, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into his house and eat with him, and he will eat with me.

To those who win the victory, I will give the right to sit beside me at my throne. Wow. Just as I have been victorious and now sit by my Father on his throne.

If you have ears, then listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. Isn't that a powerful passage? I notice hearing in America these days is a great emphasis on revival. People praying for revival.

People going into extreme fasting. I would warn you against going into extreme fasting until you try a little minimum fasting. Why don't you try to miss one meal? You might find that's not so easy.

How many of you have ever missed a meal for Jesus? Quite a few of the others haven't got into that blessing yet. Many of you are praying, God forbid. But there's a lot of people talking about revival.

There must be a book every month about revival. And I'm not against what I call the Big Bang Revival. I call it the Plan B Revival.

And they occasionally happen. I was speaking at Wheaton College about a year after they had a sort of a Big Mini Bang Revival there. I already wrote a book about it.

They usually write books right away. That usually helps quench the spirit. But anyway, by the time I got to Wheaton College, the students, I was speaking at their missions event for three or four days.

They said, please don't mention the revival. That was the counsel they gave me. I noticed as I read this book about revival that for large periods of time at Wheaton College, these big revivals didn't take place.

These are more emotional revivals. A lot of repentance and people turning in their pornographic magazines and repenting of having sex with their girlfriend. And it gets all pretty, very messy, people weeping.

And these things do occasionally happen in history. They always talk about the Welsh Revival. I visit Wales a lot.

There's not much sign of that anymore. In fact, many of them started to backslide within a week of the revival. Let me just say, if a Big Bang Revival ever does come, and I hope it does, I pray for it, the very next day, suppose it comes on Sunday, Big Bang Revival, thousands converted, people walking down the street, boom, just fall over and get converted.

Let me tell you, the very next day will be the toughest, messiest day in the life of the church. I guarantee you. So don't think revival is a cop out.

Revival is going to somehow set the hands of history back, put a born again praising, standing on his head president in the White House. We are known as a nation of naive people. That's one of our reputations around the world.

You don't have to react to it. Just think about it and consider the behavior of various people who have been in the White House over the years. But our God is wanting us to have spiritual discernment.

Our God is wanting us to know His Word. Our God is wanting us to know the difference between the true and the false. And I believe our God is also wanting us to know that plan A revival is Jesus.

Plan A revival is Jesus, by His Spirit, living in you. You don't have to wait for that. You don't have to roll on the floor for that.

You don't have to fast. You just need to, by faith, receive the Lord Jesus, which most of you have at conversion. And then day by day, through repentance, through grace, through the Word, through prayer, all that the Holy Spirit is doing, you walk day by day in the power of the Holy Spirit.

I want to ask you a question. I've heard that there's two services tonight. That's great.

I hope you come back to the second service because it takes me at least 45 minutes to get warmed up and I'm jet lagged and I probably should be in bed. But I want to ask you this question. Are you, maybe, I don't know if anyone's asked you this, are you filled with the Holy Spirit? I know in some places, the moment you mention the Holy Spirit, people start to get nervous because they know there's a lot of extremism going on under the name of the Holy Spirit.

And that bothers me. I've actually written about that in my book. But there's just a greater danger, probably not here, but in a lot of conservative places I go, that we overreact to extremism and we end up in the deep freeze of dead orthodoxy.

I remember, how many of you have ever heard of Brother Andrew, God's smuggler? Amazing character. You should read his books. He's another Dutchman.

I'm only half Dutch. He's completely Dutch, which is dangerous. And he's known as Brother Andrew, God's smuggler.

Tonight, you've got Brother George. That's my name. I also went into this Bible smuggling in the Soviet Union and I blew it.

I got arrested by the KGB, thrown out of the country. So I'm known as Brother George, God's bungler. But I remember one day preaching in the Netherlands with Brother Andrew and also with Corey Tinboom and Brother Andrew asked me if in my meeting in the afternoon I'd given an invitation.

I said, well, no, I hadn't. Maybe you can do that, Andrew. And he said, I think I will.

I've learned it's easier to cool down a fanatic than warm up a corpse. True. Do you think the biggest problem in Fort Lauderdale is too much enthusiasm for Jesus Christ? Too much witnessing, too much love, too much care for the poor, too much zeal, too much prayer.

I don't know Fort Lauderdale. Well, I'm pretty new here. I come from a small town called London, England.

And A.W. Tozer. How many of you ever read the writings of A.W. Tozer? Probably the most piercing, cutting edge writer in the last couple of years, 50 years. He's with the Lord now.

Tozer said to think that too much enthusiasm and zeal was the greatest problem in the average church was like sending a squadron of policemen in a nearby cemetery to guard against a major demonstration by the residents at midnight. This is not the biggest problem in town. I want to ask you, are you filled with the Holy Spirit tonight? That means the fruit.

That means the gifts. Of course, that means love. It means reality and witness.

It means reality and prayer. We're not talking perfection, but we're talking reality, which is an ongoing process. And I just love to shout from the housetops when I get the chance that revival is Jesus.

That's plan A. You put your hands on the plow. You let Christ take over your life, and you never, ever take your hands off. That is my own personal testimony.

Maybe God has allowed that in my life. I do not boast saving Jesus Christ. Just to bring into balance 1,000 testimonies of American backsliders.

You know the story. Came to Jesus, went on for a while, got discouraged, fell away, went to the Christian conference, came back to Jesus, went on for a while, got married, went on for a while, got divorced, went to a Christian camp, rededicated life, went for counseling, got sorted out, came back to the Lord. Praise God when that happens.

I've had 100,000 people in my meetings come forward or stand up to come back to Jesus. I'm not against that. And if you're away from Jesus, tonight you can come back and drink again.

It's a fountain of never-ending water. But I'll tell you, plan A is still, you put your hands on the plow, you commit your life to Jesus, and you never, ever turn back. That has been... Amen.

There's nothing wrong with clapping. That has been my experience. Every single day for 42 years.

You know, Billy Graham used to be greatly criticized. Now that he's so old, they don't criticize him so much. But he was greatly criticized.

And I was told all over the place, oh, Billy Graham converts. You know, a lot of emotionalism. And it doesn't last.

It doesn't last. All over the world, I've met people converted through Dr. Billy Graham. Many of them have last.

Missionaries, pastors. It's not Billy Graham. If you read his autobiography, which I'm doing right now, you discover how ordinary and how many struggles he had as a young man.

It's God. The same God that anointed Billy Graham and has used him and Ruth is the same God that wants to use you. I believe one of the reasons God's brought me here tonight in his providence, and the story of being here is quite incredible, is because God wants to use you much more than he's using you at present.

I know he's already using you, many of you. He was already using me when I was a baby Christian in my high school. But he wanted to use me more, so he sent me to Mexico.

Then he sent me to the Soviet Union, then to Spain, then to India, then to Nepal, then to Bangkok. Then he put me in a little pub, a little bar in England. We had converted it into a Christian bookshop.

And I began to dream dreams about having a ship to sail across the seas with 200 tons of literature and people and vehicles and be able to train them while you're traveling, reading, studying, lecturing. And that ministry now has gone on for 27 years and has given the gospel to 100 million people. God uses ordinary people and God wants to use you.

And God wants you to know the reality of his Holy Spirit every single day, the rest of your life. And if you're already experiencing that, God just wants you to give you that greater assurance that you're not going to lose that. You don't have to lose that.

You may lose some of the initial first love in terms of emotion, but you can know the reality of the Holy Spirit all your life. D.L. Moody. How many of you ever heard of D.L. Moody? Not so well-known anymore, but boy, a well-educated group here.

A secular encyclopedia described D.L. Moody as overweight American evangelist who depopulated hell by 2 million souls. It's not bad. It's not bad.

And D.L. Moody used to emphasize the need to be filled again and again with the Holy Spirit. And one day he was going on about this and a little lady in the front row raised her hand and she said, Mr. Moody, why do you keep going on about being filled again and again? He looked her in the eye and he said, Madam,

because I leak. I say, thank you, Jesus, because I'll tell you, you're looking at one weak, leaky Christian leader here tonight.

I want to be very honest with you. I've shared part of my testimony that I've known this reality and this grace, this excitement every day, but I'll tell you in the midst of that, I've had many miserable minutes when I've got away from Jesus, when I've got discouraged, when I got angry. Let me give you a little bit more of my testimony.

My grandfather on my mother's side was an alcoholic. He had Irish, Scottish, and English blood. Can you imagine? That's toxic.

My grandmother, dear soul, she divorced him. I only met him twice in my life. My dad's side, both my dad and my grandfather came over from the Netherlands.

His father was an atheist. There was no spiritual heritage. That was my background.

So at 16, as I've already shared, I was lost and found Jesus, or he found me in this Billy Graham meeting. I went back to my high school. I found out this lady had been praying for the high school for about 15 years.

Her children all went through that high school with a very powerful, godly testimony. Amazing story, the story of this woman's children. Ordinary housewife, praying, committed to world missions.

She had all these missionary pictures. When she discovered missionary books like this Operation World, I mean, she almost came unglued. Amazing, ordinary woman.

And if you want to be on the cutting edge of mission, if you want to be on the cutting edge of what the Holy Spirit is doing, learn to pray. Learn to pray. Acts 12, Peter was in prison, but the church was gathered together without ceasing, praying for him.

He was soon out of prison. Without exaggeration, I can tell you, in my own lifetime, I have experienced at least 10,000 answers to prayer. Our own little fellowship that started in this high school from nothing, called the Christian Youth Committee.

We were only 17 and 18. We held a few meetings. A few people got converted.

I went off to college. I came back six months later, 600 came out to the meeting, including my own father. I shared my testimony.

I gave an invitation. I didn't even know how to preach. I had about 125 stood up to believe on the Lord Jesus.

I soon found myself going to Mexico. That's 40 years ago, the summer of 57. We discovered that we could learn a language rather quickly when we got among the people.

We worked in the prisons. We worked in the streets. We played phonograph records that preached the gospel when we were still learning the Spanish.

We saw people come to Christ, and that was the birth, one of the major birthplaces of the whole short-term missions movement. Since that day, we have 90,000, 9-0, 90,000 go on our evangelistic campaigns

somewhere in the world. And through that, we developed into a longer-term missionary fellowship while maintaining the short-term program as well.

We have given the gospel, these various teams, as we always work on teams, to 900 million people face-to-face. One woman prayed. One woman prayed.

God is into operation multiplication. God is into using ordinary people. And it's God's will that none of us who love and know Jesus, none of us are lukewarm.

And tonight, if you're lukewarm, I beg of you in the name of Jesus to turn from it. Why do people become lukewarm? I think some become lukewarm because they get hurt in the church. I believe many people have unrealistic expectation when they get involved in church life.

Even when we're first converted, we often have unrealistic expectation. We take certain verses out of context, and we somehow believe we're going to become some kind of Holy Joe overnight, and we're not going to have our struggles. I thought my pornography struggle would just go.

I took my magazines and burned them. That was easy. Nice little fire.

What was that going to do with all the memories? What was that going to do with all the struggle that still was in my soul in the area of lust? I have battled lust all my life. I'm like an alcoholic, except I'm a pornoholic. I have to stay away from it.

I have to have an accountability group. I walk in the light with my wife. I walk in the light with other people.

I developed a 25-point program to stand against my attraction to pornography and to the opposite sex. That's followed me all of my life. I don't like to say that.

That's the truth. Even as a Christian leader, once I was on a prayer walk through the woods in England, absolutely sincere. Anybody who knows me, and I've had hundreds who've stood with me for over 30 years in the work, and every one of them has to raise their own finance, so they're not staying with me because I pay them some salary.

But I'm walking through the woods praying, and suddenly I see a pornographic magazine hanging in the tree. It's not what you expect in the woods. I know a lot of you have funny ideas about Britain, but that's not what we have in our woods.

I got a little closer, and I saw there were bullet holes through the magazine, and that caught me off guard. So I went up to see, and I was finished. Now, how I would love to just testify, man, you know, I get my name in the Gospel Gazette, that in the power of the Holy Spirit, I just looked at that magazine and miraculously, you know, just completely destroyed it with a laser beam of holy growth power.

The truth, I'm into truth, which hurts. That magazine made a complete fool out of me for at least five minutes in the woods that day. I am only here tonight, 42 years later, because of the grace of God.

I'm only here because the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. I'm still a failure. I don't fit into missions.

I don't fit into missions. I don't even fit into the church. I might fit into a Calvary chapel, but I certainly wouldn't fit into a normal church.

Yeah, it's the truth. I get in trouble. I get in trouble wherever I go.

I was speaking at the Cornerstone Music Festival up near Chicago. Now, they're pretty avant-garde. You can do pretty wild things, you know, res band and that kind of music.

You can do almost anything, not get in trouble. I got carried away with the music. I was talking about world missions.

I had on my global jacket, my beautiful global shirt. I wanted to show them my global underwear. Well, what's wrong with that? So I took my trousers down in front of a few thousand people to show them my global underwear.

People got upset. Can you imagine me going down the road to some nice little, you know, Presbyterian church and taking down my trousers? Hi, folks. I promised my wife I wouldn't do that anymore.

But I didn't want to disappoint you completely. So I brought them with me. It also serves as a tremendous hat.

Some people wondered how and why God ever let me start a missionary fellowship. I figured there was a conversation after my conversion over New Jersey. A bunch of angels were getting together for pizza.

And they were discussing if there was any mission society that would accept a character like me. I was still struggling with bad attitudes. I was still finding a lot of God's people a pain in the neck.

And I developed a little prayer. Thank you, Lord. I'm not a giraffe.

I was still wrestling with some struggles in the area of lust. I certainly found church services awkward and the music somewhat boring. And so they went through this list of, you know, mission, what mission society is going to accept somebody like this? And they got all very discouraged, all these angels.

And they said, there's no, there's no mission group that's going to accept this guy. And the God of mercy from the other side of heaven said, let him start his own. So much for the history of Operation Mobilization.

Isn't it wonderful that God has a plan for every one of us? None of us have to be left out. Whatever your struggles, whatever your difficulties. A lot of times when I go to churches like this, I find people who have had quite a bit of failure in their life.

And I, again, want to shout it from the housetops. Failure is the backdoor to success. When the KGB arrested me and my whole plan for Bible smuggling for the Soviet Union finished.

You know, I didn't feel too good. They were giving me a lot of newspaper coverage. American spy arrested, promised me all expenses paid vacation in Siberia.

I still was not encouraged. After two more days of interrogation, they decided I was a religious fanatic. Imagine.

But they then took me to the Austrian border with a submachine gun escort. I was a broken person. I decided to stop and spend a day in prayer.

And God met me in that day as much as ever in my life. Before that, our work was very small. It was known as Send the Light, STL.

But in that day of prayer, and I might say our main thrust was the communist world and the Muslim world. We were not interested in Western Europe. We weren't even interested in the United States, really.

I'd moved with no plan of ever coming back. I've never been back except to come and preach. But God broke me through that failure and showed me I had to be more involved with a church, which meant Western Europe.

And he gave me that name, Operation Mobilization, which has stuck with us to this day. By the next summer, we had 200 people from Europe who joined us. By the next summer, we had 2,000.

And it's exploded ever since. It's one of the largest mission movements in the world. Failure is the backdoor to success.

Don't be afraid to fail. I picked up a book sometime by this pastor in Chicago, Erwin Lutzer. I don't know if you've ever seen that book, Failure, the Backdoor to Success.

It's a brilliant book. I recommend it. I've not read it myself.

Just the cover was such an inspiration to me. Failure, the Backdoor to Success. Seriously.

Another one of my great struggles in my Christian life, I don't know if any of you can relate to this, is sort of a Darth Vader kind of negative, negativeness. How many of you have a negative streak that somehow has not disappeared yet in your life? You see the dark side of things. I'd love you to write me a letter because I specialize in praying for negative people.

And I've learned how to be more optimistic myself. One of my great stories of victory and optimism, and this is the truth. I was preaching in a cathedral in Pakistan.

It was a very important meeting. I was told the bishop was there. I even put a suit and a tie on, which I almost detest.

But, you know, contextualization. You're in Pakistan, you got to put a suit and a tie on. I tell you, the world's out of control.

Anyway, I was trying my best. And as I brought forth one of the points in my sermon, a pigeon flew directly over me and dropped an unbelievable glob on the sleeve of my suit in front of these people. Is this not a negative moment? But God was changing me.

And I looked at that crowd and I said, praise the Lord, the elephants don't fly. Seriously, there is hope for all of us. Negative people, cynical people, fearful people, doubting Thomases.

Why do we give the idea sometimes it's wrong? It's wrong to express our doubts. Some churches, you're condemned if you express your doubts. I have had so many doubts along life's road, so many struggles.

These things in the Christian faith, even in the Bible, especially the Old Testament, have never made a lot of sense to me as a human being. I accept it. I believe it.

But I can't deny my doubts. And I was so helped by a great Scottish theologian once who said, great faith is not in the absence of doubt. Great faith is often in the midst of doubt.

And I share my testimony as a struggling, doubting, borderline, agnostic, needy, so-called missionary, that there is hope for strugglers like you and me. Jesus is real. He forgives.

He uplifts. He fills. We have no reason to be lukewarm.

It may be bitterness. It may be hurt. It may be disappointment.

Have you read Philip Yancey's brilliant book, *Disappointment with God*? You've got a mega bookstore there. They probably have a copy. Or Ronald Dunn's amazing book, *When Heaven Was Silent*.

You know, you get some people who get very, very extreme on healing. In our own movement, we try to keep a balance. And we believe Jesus heals.

And we want everything we see in the New Testament. But we also want integrity. We want honesty.

We want reality. We want truth. And to be honest, sometimes when I pray for people who are ill, they get worse.

You know, that's not much of an encouragement, is it? That doesn't exactly excite you to go around. You know, you tell people your testimony. Most people I pray for get more ill.

Excuse me, would you like me to pray for you, brother? Oh, no, thanks. I think I'll go to the church down the road. We worship a God of mystery.

Let us stop thinking we're going to get all the answers to subjects like suffering or why did God create us in the first place? Yes, keep reading J.B. Phillips, C.S. Lewis, Josh McDowell, whoever. But remember, the end of the day, we worship a God of mystery. I'm a sort of a movie buff.

Oh, I've watched lots of movies. And my latest one, I've just seen it twice now. The second time, I only watched part of Jodie Foster, you know, *Contact*.

How many of you have seen that? Whoa, I know you don't show these in the Sunday school. But I was getting angry. I get very emotional in the cinema.

I don't know if you've ever seen Mr. Bean in the cinema. But anyway, I get very emotional in the cinema. And I thought this is an atheistic film.

I was boy, I was really getting uptight. Jodie Foster was the atheist. And this guy said 80 percent of all Americans and everybody else in the world believes in God.

And you don't believe in God. But the end of the film. Ah, well, we don't want to tell you.

But I'll tell you that film to me just testifies there is a heaven. We are going to be with God through Jesus Christ when it's all over. But when we don't understand where exactly it is and how it all works out.

Great faith is not in the absence of doubt. Maybe there's someone here tonight even holding back from even coming to Jesus in the first place and surrendering your life because you still have doubts or you still have questions or maybe something terrible happened to you as a child. I would ask you, let it go.

Let it go and believe on the Lord Jesus. People sometimes ask those of us committed to world missions what it's all about. And I just simply say it's about people.

It's about telling people about Jesus. If you live in this part of Florida, you have 100 times more chance to hear about Jesus Christ than if you lived in Afghanistan or Tunisia or Libya. Some of you have heard about the 1040 window.

You may not know what it is, but most of you probably do. 10 degrees north of the equator to 40 degrees north of the equator. That's the 1040 window starting right there.

The western part of Africa going right through Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, right through Egypt, Saudi Arabia, right through Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, place like Turkey, the southern part of Central Asia, right through Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Burma, right on over through Korea and Japan. That is the famous 1040 window where 90% of the more unreached people in the world live. And I try to bring this to a close tonight by asking you to pray for the people of that mega zone.

80 to 90% of all the extreme poor people of the world. 80 to 90% of the more unreached people of the world. Lands like Turkey, which have been our target field from the beginning of our movement.

Afghanistan, Iraq, which we're hearing on the news these days. Those places have 1% or 1 tenth of 1% as much witness as we have in our desperately needy country. So how can we imagine what it's like? Therefore, it is only reasonable, it is only logical, that as we attempt to reach our own nation, which you are so effectively doing, that we also consider on the basis of the commands of Jesus to be doing something about these other places.

And those who send are just as important as those who go. One of the books you can get free from our little table is called Serving as a Sender. And as you read through this little book, you will get excited and realize that being at home working in this job or that job, that is not second best.

Your work matters to God. In Grand Prix racing, which fascinates me a bit, for every man behind the wheel of the car, there are 50 on the team. Recently in a big Grand Prix race over in Europe, the team did not change the tire fast enough.

I don't know if you saw that. The guy lost the race. For every one missionary, we need 50 on the team, praying, financing.

Billy Graham once said, the hardest thing for a person to give is their money. When I first heard that, I thought, Billy, you're my spiritual father, but I don't believe that. The hardest thing to give is your life.

Then I read the rest of the sentence. It's always good to read the rest of the sentence. That a person's money represents his time or her time, talent, energy, education, tear, toil, converted into currency.

And so when we give, not in a token way, when we give in a total commitment way, we are giving our life. And at present in America, there are not too many willing to give their life. What a rebuke when an unconverted character like Ted Turner drops a billion dollars in the United Nations coffin.

I don't think it's called a coffin. Coffers. When we have so many Christians with so much money, who give so little of it, even to the work of the kingdom.

And I have this prayer request. For most of you are probably like me, a bit broke. To pray for the people of America who specially claim to know Jesus and have all this money.

Because that money, just as my time and your time, that's the most valuable thing I have, needs to be presented completely to God. I believe all this money needs to be presented completely to God. Millions and hundreds of millions are waiting for their first gospel tract.

Tens of millions are waiting to have a Bible in the New Testament. Not in English, but in their own language. I could list 100 projects just in my own small sphere that are held up for the lack of finance.

Yes, we need workers. We pray for workers. Jesus Christ taught us to pray for workers.

Matthew chapter 9. Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send forth workers into the harvest. But we also need the finance. 2 Corinthians 8, 2 Corinthians 9. We need the finance to send them and to make sure they have the tools to do the job.

It involves airplanes. It involves ships. It involves bicycles.

It involves tens of millions of Jesus films. It involves cassettes and tracks. It involves computers.

In this day where we can share our faith with a Muslim in Saudi Arabia on the internet. Tell you, we live in exciting days. But we need more exciting people who will put their hand on the plow and determine they will never ever turn back.

And if one leaky, needy character from New Jersey who struggled with so many things all my life. If I got talking about my marriage, you would not believe it. I'm the same wife for 37 years.

Completely faithful to her by God's grace. But humanly speaking, we were a mismatch. It's a Bible college.

Thank you. It's a Bible college marriage. I stepped out.

I'd been on a two and a half year fast. No women for two and a half years because I had so many problems on that. Went to Mexico.

No girls, you know. But I was going out of my mind. Trying to be totally committed in this area.

Stepped out of the elevator at Moody Bible Institute. I left university to go to Moody. Turned to the right.

There was this girl sitting at the desk. It was love at first sight. But I go, no, this can't be.

She was a little quiet girl from Iowa and Milwaukee. I was this impetuous loud guy from New Jersey. I said, I guess you're not going to the mission field, are you? First question.

She said, well, why do you say that? Well, none of the really nice looking chicks around here are going to the mission field. They're all looking for pastors. Needless to say, there was not love on first sight by her.

We then had a meeting together. It wasn't really a date. It was sort of an organizational strategy meeting.

First date. And in that meeting, I said to her, probably nothing will ever happen between you and me. But I just want to be open and honest and upfront.

I'm going to be a missionary. If you marry me, you'll probably end up being eaten by cannibals in New Guinea. It's the first date.

The next week I gave her a bag of dirty laundry. I said, wash this is unto the Lord. That really goes over big in the 90s.

And then we sat down for the third date and read the book of Acts. And then we went door to door among Spanish speaking people in Chicago. Somehow she got caught up in what was happening as OM was being born.

She ended up going to Mexico. We were in Mexico City together. It was a disaster.

She discovered she had three or four illnesses. She knew about these illnesses, but she discovered they were emotionally induced called psychosomatic illnesses. And she needed a lot of love.

She came from a home where her father was killed in the war. Her stepfather was opposed to her, threw her out of the house. That's why she was in Chicago.

She was emotionally a very vulnerable person. And in that crusade, that campaign in Mexico City, I was going to the university. I was trying to distribute a million pieces of literature.

I was preaching every second night in Spanish. I didn't have much time for my fiance. It was disaster.

She was crying every night. She was depressed. And then I left her there.

I said, you stay here on your own, learn the language. I'm going back to Chicago. Then one of my best friends fell in love with her, called me up.

He was a Mexican. I always in my love and my extremism said, anything you want is yours. He called me up.

He said, I want your fiance. Needless to say, I went into prayer and fasting for a pretty interesting time. And she came back to Chicago and we talked and we realized we'd have to break the engagement.

I could never, I could never meet her needs. The love, the insecurity. She went back to her room.

She had heard a message from the Keswick Convention about Jesus. About the all sufficiency of Jesus. And in her room that night, in a quiet way, God met her and said in her heart, I'm enough.

Not Jesus plus George, Jesus plus success. She had said, I'll go to the mission field if you give me a husband. Jesus said, I'm enough.

Talks about that in the book of Colossians. She woke up the next morning completely healed of those psychosomatic illnesses. She has been my faithful wife for 37 years, bore three children and now four grandchildren.

Yes, there've been struggles. There's been mistakes. There's been failures.

I'm not an easy person to live with. You just looking at me have already prayed for my wife. But God has met us again and again.

There's a little book on the table. I can't give it free, but even for 50 cents you can have it. Called Calvary Road by Roy Heshin.

In our first week of marriage, I didn't believe hardly in weddings. We had it after a Sunday morning service. A quick preach at a reception.

My friend got up and preached about forsaking all. Told the whole crowd at reception we were going to tell. We were going to sell all the wedding gifts to support the ministry.

That went over really well. We headed to Mexico the next day. I prayed a prayer, an extreme prayer.

Lord, I don't want to spend any money. And so we sold the wedding cake. The first gas station tried to give him a cake for gas.

It just blew his mind. He gave me free gas and told me to get out of there. That's the truth.

The second station the next morning, the guy was a Christian. He couldn't believe it. Offering me his cake.

A missionary said, keep the cake. Free gas, frees oil. 400 miles later, that guy wasn't a Christian.

He wasn't so pleasant, but he liked cake. He bought the cake. We got all the way to Mexico.

I think we spent one dollar. And I got that back from a guy. Back in those days, I mainly taught my wife from a couple of verses out of Ephesians.

Not even the whole chapter. Watch out for whole chapters. That's really something.

Just a couple of verses. Submit, submit, submit. I tell you, she went for it.

She went for it. And we went to Mexico City. We were there living.

And our marriage was absolutely fantastic for several, several weeks. Then she read those other verses. I'm glad that you can laugh.

I hope your wife is also able to laugh at you. And I hope you're able to laugh at yourself. Because I say this.

I remember selling books door to door in my hometown. And a lady buying a load of books really excited me. And then she sat me down and she said, son, do you read the Proverbs? I said, well, not much.

She said, you need to read a proverb every day. Proverb a day will keep the devil away. There's 31.

She opened a Bible. 31 Proverbs. I've been reading the Proverbs almost every day ever since 38 years.

We need the Proverbs, not just the Psalms. Christians, just the Psalms, they become a little cuckoo. Need the Proverbs to bring them into balance.

Really? I read the Proverbs so much, I started to write my own. And I share with you my favorite proverb that I wrote myself. I don't know if it's inspired, but it's true.

Where two or three of the Lord's people are gathered together, sooner or later, there'll be a mess. How many of you have ever experienced that among God's people? Yes. But our great God, our God of grace, our God of mercy, our God of plan B, plan C. He knows how to un-mess the mess.

Maybe some of you feel you've had great failure in your life. Maybe for you, it's not plan B. Plan A, I don't think hardly anybody's on plan A. You make one wrong term, plan A, history. Plan B can be just as great as plan A. Because we have a sovereign God of grace who forgives, who restores.

Plan C, plan D. I've talked to people. They've had so many failures, so many struggles, so many difficulties. They say to me, is there any hope for me? I think I'm a plan H Christian.

You know what I say? Praise God for a big alphabet. Press on. Press on.

In the name of Jesus. Amen. Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, we thank and praise you that you use weak, struggling, ordinary people even if they're from New Jersey, even if they're born in Patterson. We thank you, God, that you cure pornoholics, alcoholics, stoleholics, and all the other holics. And that you can keep us going by the power of your Holy Spirit.

We thank you, Lord, you can set us free from lukewarmness. And you can keep us free from lukewarmness. We can love you with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

And we can love our neighbor as we love ourself. Whether we be across the street or across the ocean. And so we would pray for your great worldwide cause.

Especially for the forgotten people in the forgotten places. And the starving people and the street children. That, Lord, we may see an army of workers sent out.

And that we may see an avalanche of finance going out to help them and minister to them. And enable them to have the tools to do the job. Lord, I just thank you for the privilege of just being your servant.

I failed you so much. I've been a poor husband and a poor father and a poor leader. I've done stupid things and said stupid things.

But again and again, Lord, you've reached down. You've picked me up. I thank you, Lord, that though I may not fit in the average church, I fit in your kingdom.

And I can even maybe come with my globe and my underwear. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.

Thank you. Let me challenge you. This evening you heard, I believe, a gospel message designed specifically for you.

There is no way that I could ever know the story behind every one of your faces. But I would be remiss if I thought that there were people that came here tonight that don't identify with many of the examples that George shared with you. And let me share with you, as we close in prayer, there will be an opportunity for you to come forward and pray with the many of the prayer counselors that we have forward here.

And don't just look at your watch and think of it as being an inconvenient time. Because I believe that you're here by design. And that if God is touching your heart this very evening, maybe you're someone that's backslidden and you're someone that's walked away from the Lord.

And tonight God showed you how much he does love you. And that you can never walk away too far. Maybe you're someone that's come in tonight and, you know, you've come out of curiosity.

Someone has asked you to come maybe 150 times. And you finally find yourself here. You're alone.

You don't know anybody. But God's been knocking on your heart because you do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. On the other hand, maybe you found yourself as a seasoned believer that's allowed the seasoning to get a little old.

And you've lost some of your flavor. And God's challenging you to be involved. To look around the world.

To be a prayer warrior. To be like that little old lady that prayed for that high school. God wants to use each and every one of you.

And so therefore, I'm going to close in prayer. And we will be closing in hymn. And I would ask and challenge those of you that want to know more about what it means to have that personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Or maybe you want to sincerely recommit your life to Jesus Christ. You make your way forward. And the rest of you, be praying for those guys.

And as you go home and have a time to go to sleep, ask that God would talk to you this evening. Be challenged by the things that God shares with you. And don't allow this evening to be an evening that you just came and you said, OK, that was pretty good.

And you go on with your life. But believe it's a divine moment that you're here tonight by design. Let us pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, We thank you for the simple word of God. Lord, what we believe is what is written in your word. It's not something that has been made up by some guru somewhere or some self-help mongrel somewhere.

But Lord, it's something that we read simply in your word. How you've used ordinary people to do extraordinary things. And Lord, we have seen through your word and we see it as we look around our globe today that Christians fail many, many, many times.

And that Lord, we see the depth of your grace and the width of your mercy because you are a loving and merciful God. Lord, it boggles my mind continually to this day that you have chosen to use us to share your word. Lord, to proclaim your name.

Lord, there are people like Rich and Arthie who have had a stirring in their heart. And Lord, they're hopping on an airplane in a few weeks and they're heading over across the sea to share the gospel. But Lord, there are those of us here that have made it possible for them to go because we've pulled out a checkbook and written a check.

There's others of us who spent a lot of time on our knees praying for people like Rich and Arthie. And Lord, maybe we're here this evening because someone spent a lot of time on their knees asking that we would be here. And so Lord, we see that it's a big family.

It's a big family of God working together. The body of Christ working together. And so Lord, now, as we have a chance to exit quietly and slowly from this building, I pray that those that feel a stirring in their heart will make their way up here.

And that Lord, you'll put them with the right counselor and there'll be a good chance to talk and an opportunity to open up their hearts and invite you in. And that Lord, we see that remarkable work of God

beginning. Lord, we thank you for George and the ministry that you have given to him.

And Lord, knowing that he's just like one of us and that Lord, you've used him in amazing ways. And Lord, we pray that you continue to keep him healthy and you continue to use that ministry. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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